

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1663

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TSPA VE
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON VENEZUELAN SCIENTIST
HUMBERTO FERNANDEZ MORAN

1. THE LOCAL PRESS HAS GIVEN EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS TO THE ACTIVITIES OF HUMBERTO FERNANDEZ MORAN, A VENEZUELAN SCIENTIST WHO IS A PROFESSOR OF BIOPHYSICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. IN A FULL PAGE STORY MARCH 12 IN A MAJOR CARACAS DAILY, FERNANDEZ MORAN STATED HE WOULD BE DIRECTING NASA'S SPACE SHUTTLE PROGRAM AND WAS PREPARING HIMSELF FOR A POSSIBLE SPACE FLIGHT IN 1981 ABOARD THE SHUTTLE AS AN INVESTIGATOR, WHICH WOULD MAKE HIM THE FIRST LATIN AMERICAN IN SPACE. SUBSEQUENT REPORTS HAVE FOCUSED ON HIS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE VENEZUELA AS THE LATIN AMERICAN CENTER FOR A UNITED NATIONS DATA BANK USING GEOSYNCHRONOUS SATELLITES. FERNANDEZ MORAN IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE UN WILL DECIDE ON THIS QUESTION NEXT YEAR, AND THAT BRAZIL IS CURRENTLY THE PRIME CANDIDATE. HE HAS APPARENTLY MET WITH VARIOUS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES REGARDING THE DATA BANK PROPOSAL, AND HAD BEEN NAMED AS A SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE MINISTER OF SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS.

2. THE EMBASSY ALREADY HAS AN EXTENSIVE FILE ON DR. FERNANDEZ MORAN, WHO IS HIGHLY REGARDED AS A SCIENTIST BUT IS KNOWN TO BE ERRATIC IN HIS POLITICS AND IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS. HE
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HAS LIVED IN THE UNITED STATES FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, AFTER HAVING SERVED FOR A VERY SHORT TIME IN THE GOVERNMENT OF FORMER DICTATOR MARCOS PEREZ JIMENEZ.

3. IN VIEW OF HIS RECENT STATEMENTS, THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION READILY AVAILABLE REGARDING DR. FERNANDEZ MORAN'S CURRENT LINKS WITH NASA. AND WITH THE UN DATA

BANK PROJECT. OUR FILES INDICATE THAT IN 1973 HE WAS A "PINCIPAL
INVESTIGATOR" OF LUNAR MATERIAL BUT WAS NOT REPEAT NOT ON THE STAFF OF

NASA. WE HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED SOME INQUIRIES REGARDING HIS
TIES WITH NASA.
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Message Attributes

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